

These proclamations are printed in the "Appendix" to this document, and I trust every member of your honorable body will give them a careful perusal.

In additions to these proclamations I addressed letters to various civil and military officers, and to citizens, urging the necessity of repressing these outrages and of enforcing the law. For the space of twelve months, while the laws were thus being set at naught, and while grand juries were failing to find bills, or, if they were found, petit juries refused to convict, I was almost constantly importuned by letters, and in person, by many of the victims of these outrages, and was urged to adopt some means of protection to society, and especially to the victims of the secret combinations referred to.

These combinations were at first purely political in their character, and many good citizens were induced to join them. But gradually, under the leadership of ambitious and discontented politicians, and under the pretext that society needed to be regulated by some authority outside or above the law, their character was changed, and these secret Klans began to commit murder, to rob, whip, scourge and mutilate unoffending citizens. This organization or these combinations were called the Ku Klux Klan, and were revealed to the public, as the result of the measures which I adopted, as "*The Constitutional Union Guards*," "*The White Brotherhood*," and "*The Invisible Empire*." Unlike other secret political associations, they authorized the use of force, with deadly weapons, to influence the elections. The members were united by oaths which ignored or repudiated the ordinary oaths or obligations resting upon all other citizens to respect the laws and to uphold the government; these oaths inculcated hatred by the white race against the colored race; the members of the Klan, as above stated, were hostile to the principles on which the government of the State had been reconstructed, and, in many respects, hostile to the government of the United States. They met in secret, in disguise, with arms, in a dress of a certain kind intended to conceal their persons